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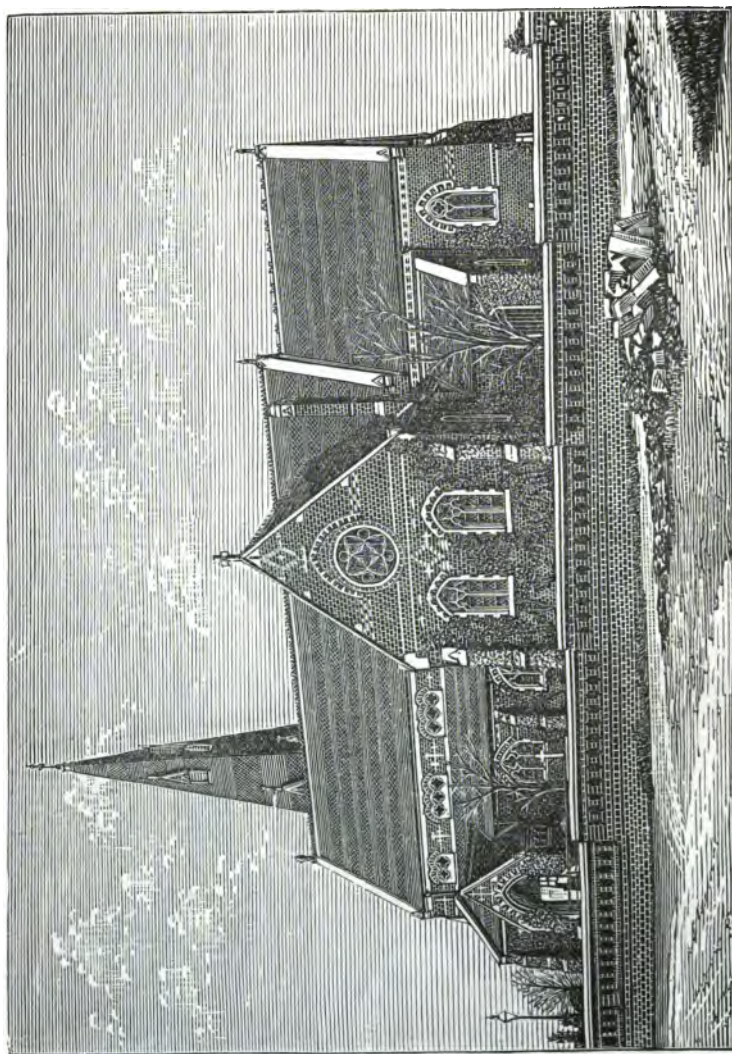
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ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, BURGESS HILL.

From a Photograph by Peters.

BURGESS HILL AS A HEALTH RESORT:

A DESCRIPTION OF THE PLACE;
THE GEOLOGY AND CLIMATE OF THE SITUATION;
A SHORT HISTORY OF ITS SITE
FROM REMOTE TIMES TO THE PRESENT DAY;
THE LOCAL SCENERY, SOME OF THE WALKS, RIDES,
DRIVES, &c., IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD, AND OTHER
MATTERS OF INTEREST.

Hints to those in Search of a Healthy
Country Home.

[WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.]

BY
THOMAS FREDERICK ISAACSON BLAKER

M.R.C.S. (Eng.), L.S.A. (Lond.), &c., &c.

If thou art worn and hard beset
With sorrows that thou would'st forget;
If thou would'st read a lesson, that will keep
Thy heart from fainting and thy soul from sleep,
GO TO THE WOODS AND HILLS! No tears
Dim the sweet look that Nature wears.—LONGFELLOW.



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Preface.

IN compiling the contents of this little pamphlet, it has been my endeavour to keep two points ever in view.

First. I have wished to let it go out to the world at large that Burgess Hill is a very desirable place to live in—a fact to which I myself am most keenly alive—and

Secondly. I have endeavoured to the best of my ability to collect from various sources some account of the HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES of that portion of the globe on which we dwell. It has further been my aim to mention those particulars which I thought would most interest *the visitors and new comers* to our neighbourhood.

Such information as I have tried to convey, adds I think zest to one's daily walks and rambles; providing at the same time healthy pabulum for the mind.

No one can be more fully aware than I am, of the difficulties of doing all this as it should be done.

With these few remarks I will now leave myself in the hands of those who do me the honour to read what I have attempted to set before them; trusting to their generosity, and to that sense of chivalry which they have inherited from their forefathers, to pardon the shortcomings they will be sure to find, in this my first little venture in the paths of literature.

T. F. I. B.,
Avonhurst,
Burgess Hill,
Sussex.

February, 1883.

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Introduction.

*God made the country and man made the town
What wonder then that health and virtue . . .
should most abound,
And least be threatened in the fields and groves?*
COWPER.

THE advantages of a home in the country, especially for children, are so thoroughly recognised in these days, that I have thought it might not be out of place to offer a few remarks to those who are seeking a suitable country residence, either for a permanency or only for some of the most beautiful months in the year,—

“When Spring, soft season, lifts her bloomy head.”

It is, of course, of *primary* importance to fix upon a healthy locality: that is to say, a place where all the sanitary arrangements are carried out in the most perfectly efficient manner, and where the drinking water is of the purest description.

Then, of course, *in the next place*, before deciding, one naturally thinks of the climate, and of the nature of the soil.

Having found a district where all these requirements are to be had, the next question generally asked is—What places of public worship exist in the neighbourhood, and what is the distance from the nearest railway station?

Then comes a matter of great importance, especially to the ladies—Are there any shops in the place? and, if so, can one obtain the daily necessities of life at them without going elsewhere? Are things dear at the shops? or, in other words, is the place a dear one to live in?

It is of importance also to have one's letters delivered punctually and regularly at least twice a day, and it is as well not to be too much out of the way for telegrams.

Another matter which must influence everyone in the choice of a healthy, and at the same time *delightful* country home (hardly secondary to any of the foregoing considerations), is the character of the surrounding scenery, the walks, drives, and places of recreation and amusement; and lastly, nearly every one would be influenced by the thought, before taking a house, as to whether or not the situation was in proximity to a large town, and not too far from London.





Chapter I.

*He chaunst to come
Unto a place where pleasure did appere,
To passe all others on the earth which were.*
EDMUND SPENSER.

NOW Sussex, as everybody knows, is full of the most charming retreats—delightful rural spots, “far from the madding crowd,” where many a weary brain would gladly rest night by night, and where laughter-loving little urchins could play to their heart’s content the whole day long, with no one to say them nay. But how many of such places are accessible to poor *paterfamilias*, who has to go daily to his office, or to whatever his business may be, in, let us suppose, Brighton or London itself?

For the great majority of people *leaving town for country life*, it is necessary for the head of the family to live within easy access of the railway station.

Taking one consideration with another, I venture to affirm that there is no place, at all events in Sussex, which has such advantages and offers such attractions to those wishing to settle in the country itself (and not in a mere suburb), as that charming and picturesque health resort, Burgess Hill—and for the reasons which follow.

Burgess Hill is governed by a Local Board consisting of a body of men who have the health of the public *their ever first consideration*. These gentlemen some two years ago called to their aid the assistance of one of the first Sanitary Engineers of the day, and, by his advice, agreed to have the whole of the place thoroughly and efficiently

drained in the most scientific manner known. This drainage scheme has been actually carried out, at a cost of something like THIRTY THOUSAND POUNDS, and I dare to assert that there is no place in England with a better or more efficient system of drainage than Burgess Hill. That is to say, the best has been done that could be done, in a thoroughly workmanlike manner right throughout.

What is the consequence? Why simply this,—The place is so free from zymotic disease, that when a case does by chance occur, one may be sure that it is an *imported* case. By that I mean brought into Burgess Hill from some other village or town.

I say with great confidence, Where is there another *country* place with such a complete and highly scientific system of drainage?

As for the water, it is second to none in the United Kingdom. It is supplied by the local Water Company to every house, fresh and pure as it comes bubbling forth from the chalky Southdowns.

The climate of Burgess Hill is delightful. The air is delicious; it invigorates and braces up the system, without being too powerful for those whose constitutions are not sufficiently strong to stand a very bracing climate. The air is laden with Ozone,* which is alone a proof of its perfect salubrity.

* This "Ozone," which one hears a good deal of and understands very little about, is explained by scientific men to be an "allotropic," or modified form of oxygen. In the laboratory it has a peculiar odour (hence its name, "Ozone," from the Greek, *ozein*, to emit an odour). It is known that where it exists the air is pure, as it is not found in crowded towns, where the atmosphere is vitiated. The presence of "Ozone" in the atmosphere may be detected by an easy test. Take a strip of white blotting or filtering paper, and moisten it with a solution of iodide of potassium and mixture of starch. If "Ozone" be present in the atmosphere, the paper (after a little exposure to the air) turns a dark blue colour. Some persons with keen noses even go so far as to assert that they can smell "the 'Ozone' in the air" at Burgess Hill. Be that as it may, its presence is certain. How it is formed science has not yet ascertained, but probably by some electrical atmospheric action. A curious thing about it is, that it is found in greater quantities some days than others.

The soil varies much in various parts of the district. It comprises sand, loam, clay and, on the confines, chalk. Huge sandstone rocks form the northern boundary of the township, and sand again is found to the south of Burgess Hill. There is, moreover, a curious sandstone formation running through the upper and centre parts of the locality, having a direction more or less from S.E. to N.W.

The clay is of such excellent quality that tiles, chimneys, ornamental vases and (in some parts of the district) terra cotta ware of the finest description are manufactured in great quantities.*

It is a very interesting and picturesque sight to watch the men making these things.

Perhaps one of the reasons of the extreme healthiness of Burgess Hill is due to the property which clay possesses of absorbing ammonia and noxious gases and vapours. It is also worthy of remark that soils composed of calcareous clay produce the finest fruits and flowers of the rosaceous kind, such as apples, pears, plums, cherries and roses. Indeed the soil of Burgess Hill is so good for growing any plants belonging to the natural order, "*Rosaceæ*," that they thrive in great profusion with the least possible amount of care. Some of the very best specimens of roses I have ever seen were grown in this charming district.

* The Wealden clay has received much attention from geologists, who tell us that, after the close of the Oolitic period, the south of England, together with other districts, was raised above the sea level, and subjected to all the destructive operations of denudation for a long period of time. Great Britain, no doubt, during this portion of the world's history, formed part of a great continent; for the Wealden beds appear to be parts of the delta of an immense river, so large that it could only have been supplied by the drainage of an extensive continent. It is probable that the mass of the continent across which the great Wealden river flowed lay to the north and west.

Remains of enormous extinct reptiles are found in the Wealden clay—for instance, the *Iguanodon*, an immense vegetable feeder, standing erect on its legs and being taller than an elephant. The *Iguanodon* derives its name from the form of its tooth, shaped like that of the living *Iguana*. Remains of *Cetiosaurus*, *Hylæosaurus*,* *Chelone*, and other reptiles are found in the Wealden formation. (See page 18.)

* A portion of the remains of *Hylæosaurus* was found at Bolney (three miles west of Burgess Hill) a few years ago.

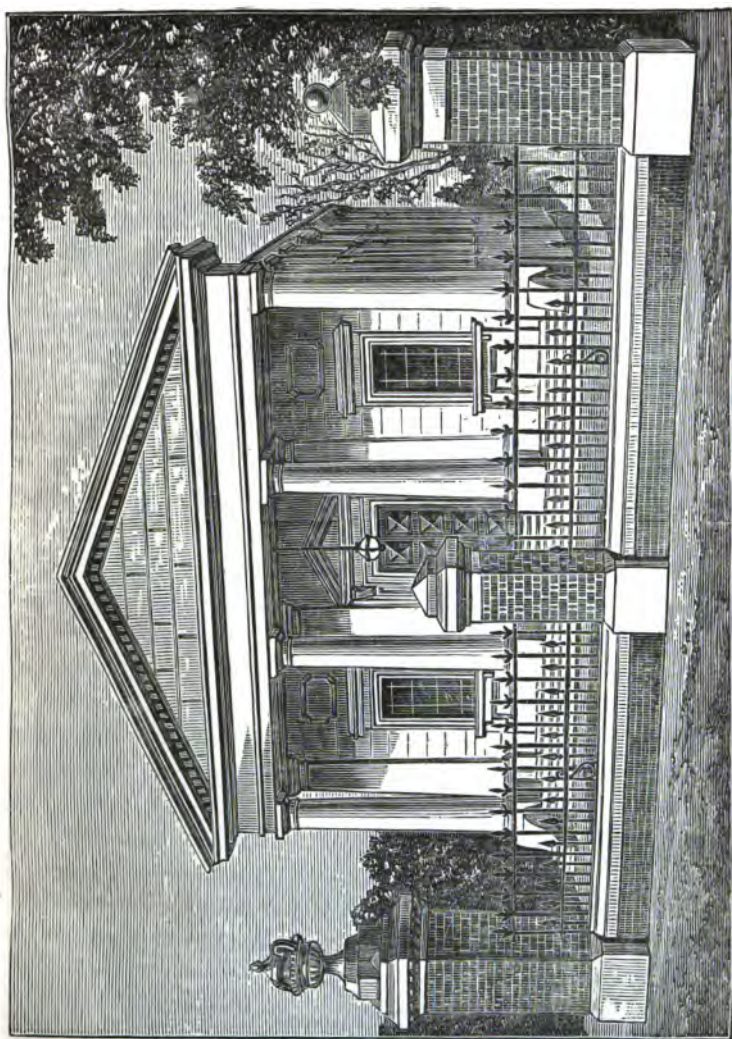
Burgess Hill is fortunate in possessing a very handsome Church dedicated to St. John the Evangelist.* It was built in 1863, from the designs of a Chichester architect. The Minister, the Rev. F. Arnold, M.A., of Christ Church, Oxford, belongs to the moderate school of theology, and consequently the services held in the Church are not of an extreme type one way or the other. They are rendered chorally by a surpliced choir of men and boys. The officiating clergyman is a powerful and effective extempore preacher.

There is a very fine Congregational Chapel, not far from the station, built by the well-known Sussex builder, Mr. S. Norman, who has, indeed, built, or been instrumental in building, many of the finest houses and shops in the neighbourhood. Members of other dissenting bodies will find places of worship presided over by ministers holding their particular theological views—*e.g.*, there are two or three different sorts of Baptist Chapels, as well as a Chapel for those holding the doctrines of the Plymouth Brethren. I am also given to understand that the Society of Friends contemplate erecting a Meeting House in a central situation.

There are not many places situated as Burgess Hill is, so fortunate as to possess two railway stations—the Burgess Hill Station on the main line from London to Brighton, and the Keymer Junction on the main line from London to Lewes, Seaford, Eastbourne, Hastings, &c. This alone is proof in itself that Burgess Hill *is an exceedingly accessible place*, offering special advantages to sportsmen, who would be within easy reach of the favourite meets of two packs of Foxhounds (the Southdown and the Horsham and Crawley), and also two packs of Harriers (the Brighton and Brookside).

There are shops of every description in Burgess Hill, and from long residence in the place, and much experience in other places, both town and country; I am convinced that Burgess Hill is not dearer than other places. It

* See Frontispiece.



BURGESS HILL CONGREGATIONAL CHAPEL.

From a Photograph by Fox.

would be absurd to say that it was much cheaper, because it is not. The best of everything can be had at a fair market price, and as there is keen competition amongst the tradespeople, it is obvious each shopkeeper must "*cut it as fine*" as it is possible to do to derive any profit at all. The meat, especially the Southdown mutton, is simply perfection itself.

It is as well to mention that there are three postal deliveries a day, and one on Sunday. Telegrams may be sent either from the Post Office or the Railway Station.

There are few, if any, places of the same description as Burgess Hill possessing a Steam Fire Engine, but not only is there an engine, but a well drilled Fire Brigade (headed by Captain Sinnock), and a constant supply of water in the mains ready for use both night and day.

Before proceeding to a description of the village or town (!) of Burgess Hill, and the scenery, walks, drives, &c., in the neighbourhood, it will be as well to point out what places of public amusement and recreation exist.

In the first place there is the Literary Institute, presented to the neighbourhood by Madame Temple in the year 1872. It is in the hands of trustees. It consists of a reading room, free lending library, smoking and billiard room, and upstairs is a large Assembly Hall suitable for public meetings of every description. Here lectures are delivered, private theatricals given, and very constantly concerts are held of a first-class description. Private families give balls in this room, when desirous of doing so, upon paying a small fee to the trustees, and one or two subscription dances are held in it every winter.

One of the chief uses of this fine Hall is for the holding of Art Classes twice a week from September to July. They are in connection with the Science and Art Department of the Committee of Council on Education, South Kensington, and are a great boon to the young ladies of Burgess Hill and adjacent villages.

For outdoor recreation, of course the country itself offers

the principal attractions, but Burgess Hill possesses a large meadow, planted with trees and surrounded by an ornamental fence, which goes by the name of "The Park." Seats are placed round it, and in the summer the local band plays selections of music in "the Park." The local Cricket Club has a good "pitch" there, and many very interesting matches are played there in the season. This club is an excellent one, being much strengthened by the gentlemen from the neighbouring military training college, "Wyberlye." These gentlemen, it may be remarked, constantly give dramatic and other entertainments at the Institute in aid of the various local charities, and are ever ready to help a deserving cause. The thanks of the whole neighbourhood are due to them.

Finally, it may be added, there is a large school for the sons of gentlemen, and various ladies' schools—a Young Men's Christian Association, and a Debating Club.

Several good houses are now in course of erection, as residences for the gentry, with rents varying from £40 to £150.

It is proposed to erect a Coffee Palace in the centre of the district, and a new Mission Church is about to be built in the midst of the poor district.

Two large Banking Companies have Branch Banks in the business part of Burgess Hill, which is a great advantage to many individuals.

In conclusion, I may add that the advantages of living in such a health resort as Burgess Hill have not been lost sight of by my professional brethren, many of the medical men of Brighton having had their country residences there for many years.

Those who are interested in the subject of Death Rates will read with pleasure that, according to the report of Dr. Fussell, Medical Officer of Health for East Sussex, the death rate for Burgess Hill last year was *as low* as 12·7 per 1,000, which will compare most favourably with any town in the United Kingdom.



Chapter II.

*The earth is the Lord's, and all that therein is :
the compass of the world and they that dwell therein.*

*For He hath founded it upon the seas, and
prepared it upon the floods.—PSALM xxiv. 1, 2.*

BURGESS HILL is (politically) in the Eastern division of the county, but, as a matter of fact, it is only a very little out of the centre of Sussex (Hayward's Heath Church is said to be the exact centre). It consists of two portions: an upper or eastern portion, which constitutes Burgess Hill proper; and a lower or western portion, which goes by the name of St. John's.*

Its population consists of from 4,000 to 5,000 souls. It is forty miles from London, ten from Brighton, ten from Lewes, and four from the northern foot of the South Downs.

* St. John's takes its name from a large common, traces of which still exist, called the St. John's Common. The main high road from London to Brighton passes through this part of Burgess Hill, and, indeed, even now, every summer the Brighton coach generally traverses this road. In past time the enormous Wealden forest, the *Andredswold* (to which allusion is made further on), covered all this district. Remains of this forest are constantly brought to light about the common to this day.

It is in the *parish* of Clayton, in the *hundred* of Butting-hill, in the *rape and archdeaconry* of Lewes, in the *rural deanery* of Hurstpierpoint, and in the *diocese* of Chichester. Its County Court and Petty Session business is transacted at Cuckfield.

Burgess Hill, as we see it now, is a beautiful place of modern growth, but the district in which it is situated, and of which it forms the centre, is certainly, *if without any special history of its own*, not devoid of great interest to the thoughtful mind. We have given a short rapid glance at that distant epoch of time (countless ages ago) when the spot where Burgess Hill now stands was in the midst of a mighty river, shaded by forests of palms and arborescent ferns, with huge unseemly reptiles wallowing in its mud and waters; whilst bat-like creatures,* fearsome and uncanny to look

* Huge bat-like creatures, belonging to an extinct order of reptiles, the *Pterosauria*, represented by the *Pterodactyls*, and by the genera *Ramphorhynchus* and *Dimorphodon*.

The jaws of these creatures were provided with teeth, and although reptiles, they possessed the power of flight. Their bones, were pneumatic, as in birds. They could probably swim as well as fly. [The only *living* reptile which can support itself in the air is the flying lizard of the Eastern Archipelago—the *Draco volans*, or flying dragon.]

The *Pterosauria* are confined exclusively to the formations of the Secondary or Mesozoic geological period, of which the *Wealden* series, be it remarked, is a group. That remains of *Pterosauria* have been found in the Wealden clay, I am not prepared to say; but remains of the enormous extinct reptiles of the *Deinosaurian* family—*e.g.*, *Hylæosaurus*, *Megalosaurus*, *Iguanodon*, and *Plesiosaurus*—most certainly have been. Some of these were of enormous size, measuring from 40 to 60 feet in length. Dr. Buckland, writing of this genus (*Plesiosaurus*), describes its members as “uniting to the head of a lizard the teeth of a crocodile, a neck of enormous length, resembling the body of a serpent, a trunk and tail having the proportions of an ordinary quadruped, the ribs of a chameleon, and the paddle of a whale.”

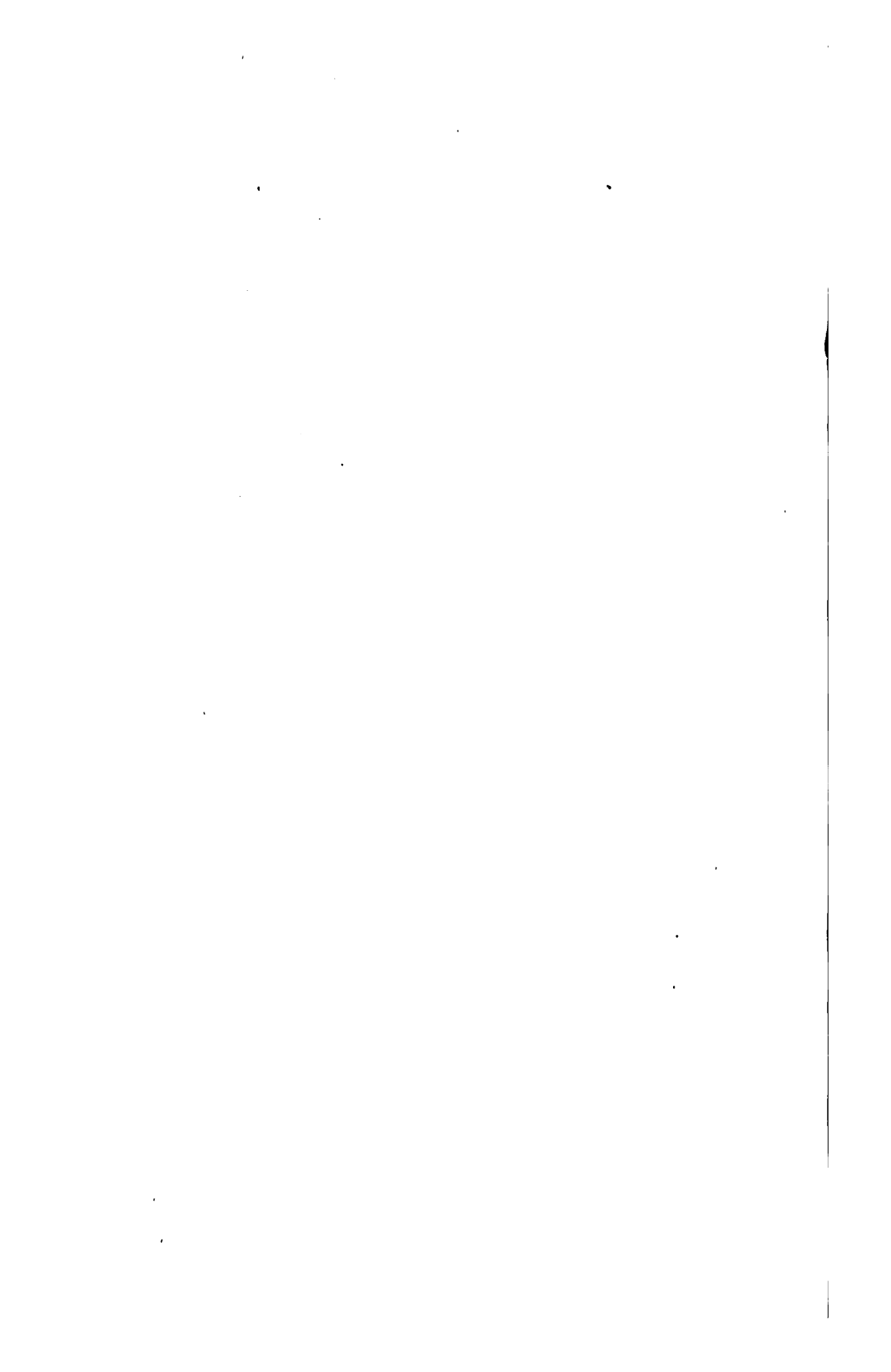
Cuvier, the great French naturalist, regarded the *Iguanodon* as the most wonderful of all these creatures. He observed that it was “*encore plus extraordinaire que tout ceux dont nous avons connaissance*.” Probably his and Professor Buckland’s estimate of its size was too large. They mentioned 70 feet as its probable length. Professor Owen’s calculation is 30 feet—a size still gigantic enough to impress strongly on the imagination the extent of that continent which formed the dry land of the cretaceous ocean, and the abundance and large dimensions of its vegetation.



FANCY SKETCH OF A PORTION OF THE WEALD OF SUSSEX IN PROCESS OF
FORMATION DURING THE SECONDARY OR MESOZOIC PERIOD.

(Compiled from various sources.)

SHOWING SOME OF THE REPTILIAN MONSTERS WHICH EXISTED IN THOSE FAR DISTANT AGES.



upon, swept through the murky atmosphere. A solemn silence reigned on every side, broken only by the rushing of the waters and the occasional awful noises made by these dreadful creatures. (*See Engraving.*) (Truly it is difficult to realise that such things really did happen *here* where the Burgess Hill Local Board now holds sway, but it is nevertheless true).

“Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting Thou art God,
To endless years the same.

“A thousand ages in Thy sight,
Are like an evening gone;
Short as the watch that ends the night,
Before the rising sun.”

* The rambler, in search of geological treasures in this neighbourhood, cannot do better than take the advice of Professor Mantell, in his second volume of the “Medals of Creation,” and following the railway from Hayward’s Heath downwards, observe the various strata.

First, the Professor says—“On arriving at Hayward’s Heath Station the tunnel exposes a good section of the Wealden sand, sandstone, shale and blue marl or oak tree clay, to a depth of about thirty-six yards. The strata are disposed in the same order and thickness as in the quarries around Cuckfield; namely, fawn-coloured sand and sandstone, and beneath layers of the blue clay. The strata are very barren in organic remains, the principal being imperfect vegetable relics, such as comminuted stems and leaves of the various species of ferns. Some of the grey laminated sandstones and shales at this place very closely resemble certain strata of the coal measures.” (Borings for coal, it might be mentioned here, were carried on some few years ago in the Weald, but were not successful.)

“Proceeding over the Weald clay with the Sussex marble of St. John’s Common, the line encounters the Shanklin sand of Sussex at Stonepound (commonly called Hassock’s) Gate. Here, then, we quit the fresh water strata of the Wealden, and again enter upon the marine deposits of the chalk formation. At the foot of the northern escarpement of the Southdowns, the chalk is penetrated at the base of Clayton Hill, the tunnel running through the lower members of the chalk—the Galt and Chalk-marl. Emerging at Piecombe, the line runs through the same cretaceous deposits.”



Chapter III.

*Where are the heroes of the ages past?
Where the brave chieftains, where the mighty ones,
Who flourished in the infancy of days?
All to the grave gone down!*—HENRY KIRKE WHITE.

IF, as I have already said, *Burgess Hill* itself is without any special history of its own, yet its site and neighbourhood are by no means devoid of historical interest, as I will endeavour forthwith to show.

It is impossible to take a walk anywhere in the country without the mind being interested first with one subject and then with another, and I have no doubt but that many like myself often love to dwell on the days of our ancestors, and think as best we can of those old tribes who “lived and moved and had their being,” in the ages of the past, here where we now dwell. Let us for a moment consider this theme, and, taking a writer of eminence for our guide, hear what he has to say about it :—

“Now, what of the primitive race which, at some remote and undefined distance in the vista of past ages, roamed over these Sussex hills, fashioning the flints and leaving their scanty vestiges of an existence anterior to the dawn of modern civilisation? The answer is not so easy as at first sight it might seem to be. They

were ancient Britons: true, but that gives only a vague and indefinite idea of the ethnic relationship of the race to the great continental stock. They were Kelts: * probably so, but we have no data whereby to identify them with the people thus denominated, who inhabited Britain at the time of Cæsar's invasion, and who have left a class of imperishable monuments (so far as time is concerned) in the circular *tumuli* which are seen far and wide, beading the outline of our hills."†

Grant Allen, in the first volume of "Knowledge," gives us some very interesting information bearing on this subject, in some articles entitled "Our Ancestors."

In the paper above quoted, be it observed, Dr. Smart thinks that we have not sufficient data to form an opinion as to the ethnic relationship of the race which formerly roamed over our hills and vallies, leaving their stone implements behind them, and so letting posterity know that they had once existed.

Mr. Grant Allen thinks *we have* sufficient data to form a very good opinion as to what manner of men they were who first inhabited Britain. It is customary to think and to speak of "Ancient Britons" (and no doubt in the main it is true, except as to the colour of their bodies) as if they were naked savages, with bodies more or less black, accustomed to go to sea in basket-work, cocktail boats, and who were a peaceable set of men until the Romans attacked them, when they proved themselves to be a warlike race indeed and very brave. And so no doubt they were, and so they remained, even long centuries after they were subjugated by the Romans (witness the manful stands they made one after another against their "English" invaders, and the time it took these pirates to overrun these islands).

But to go back to the time when Cæsar and his hosts first invaded Britain—an event which occurred so very, very long ago (even 55 years before our Saviour was born into the world) that most people have scarcely troubled to ask themselves, "By the way, where did these 'Ancient Britons'

* Not Kelts but Euskarians as will be seen further on.

† Dr. Smart in the "Sussex Archæological Collection," Vol. XIX.

come from, that the Romans found here so ready to resist them? Had they been here long, and did they, too, come as invaders meeting also with opposition? If they did, was there really a race ready to oppose *them*, and if so where in the name of wonder did *they* come from? Even supposing that when what we usually call "Ancient Britons" (Cæsar's) first took possession of these islands, they *did* find such an opposing race here, can we tell if *they* were the first comers?" —Yes, we *can* tell; they were NOT, as we will proceed to see. To sum up:—

- (1) There were Ancient Britons (Cæsar's).
- (2) There was a race here before they came.
- (3) There was a race even before them, long ages before.

It will be best to consider this last race first, taking Mr. Allen's paper for our guide.

The men of the very earliest race *that ever lived in England* are probably not in any sense our ancestors. They were those black fellows* of the *Palæolithic* or older stone age, whose flint implements and other remains we find buried in the loose earth of the river drift, or under the concreted floors of caves, and who dwelt in Britain *while it was yet a part of the mainland, with a cold climate like that of modern Siberia.*

These men must not be confounded with those mentioned in Dr. Smart's paper, who lived in much later times, viz., in the *Neolithic* or later stone age. The race Mr. Grant is speaking of belonged to the *Palæolithic* or older stone age; and he says further that these people seem to have lived before and between the recurrent cold cycles of the great Glacial period, and that they were probably *all swept away* by the last of those long chilly spells, when almost the whole of England was covered by vast sheets of glaciers, like Greenland in our own time. Since this race of men lived on these islands, *Britain has been submerged beneath several hundred feet of sea, raised again, JOINED TO THE CONTINENT, and once more finally separated from it* by the English Channel and Straits of Dover.

* The descendants of *Primitive man*, of whom Science at present *knows* nothing definitely but has sufficient data to form many conjectures. This does not imply that *he* ever inhabited Great Britain.

We now come to the predecessors of the Ancient Britons (Cæsar's). Who were they? what manner of men were they? whence did they come?—Hear Grant Allen:—

“Long after these black fellows, and long after the glaciers of the Ice age had cleared off the face of the country, a second race occupied Britain, [the predecessors of the Ancient Britons (Cæsar's)], *some of whose descendants almost undoubtedly exist in our midst at the present day.* These were the *Neolithic* or later Stone age men.* They were called Euskarians, and it is probable that they came from the south, and crossed over into Britain whilst this country was joined to the Continent. (These were the men to whom Dr. Smart was alluding.) They were short, thickset men, about five feet four inches high. In complexion they were probably white, but dark and swarthy. Their skulls were very long and narrow, which forms the best distinguishing mark of the race, *as well as the best test of its survival at the present day.*”

It is probable (the same article informs us) that the descendants of this race exist almost unmixed at the present day, as the so-called black Celts in certain parts of Western Ireland and Scotland, and in a few places in South Wales; while their blood may be still traced, in a more mixed condition, in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, and the Highlands.†

This, then, was the people, the Ancient Britons (Cæsar's) found here when they came to invade and take possession of these islands. But we must now cease to call them “Ancient Britons,” for, as I have shown, there were two races before them, each more deserving of the title.

* Anent this very interesting subject, viz, Who inhabited these islands before Cæsar's ancient Britons? I find in E. B. Tylor's “Anthropology,” page 28, the following:—“In England, the tribes who have left such stone implements were in the land before the invasion of that Keltic race, whom we call the Ancient Britons, and who, no doubt, came armed with weapons of *metal*. The stone hatchet blades and arrow heads of the older population lie scattered over our country hill and dale, moor and fen.”

† For further particulars concerning this very interesting people, I must refer my reader to Vol. I., page 350, of “Knowledge.”

We now come to consider a time in the world's history with which most minds are more familiar—I mean six or seven thousand years ago.

In those days (yesterday, as it were) a fair-skinned, yellow-haired, blue-eyed, tall, round-headed race of men were gradually leaving their Central Asian home, and were by degrees wandering more and more westward. These were the Aryans. One great branch, now speaking the Celtic variety of language, spread themselves, *long before the commencement of written history*, over the western coasts of Europe. They had given up the use of flint instruments, having found out how to make bronze tools. By and by they crossed over in a fleet of boats to Britain, and being much taller and finer men than the Euskarians (who had, be it remembered, only stone weapons), soon overcame them, and took possession of these islands. This, I take it, was some 3000 years B.C., or may be more; so that when the Romans came (55 years B.C.), they found a race of men (the Aryan Celts) who had been dwellers on the soil for some thousands of years.

At the time the Romans came, the Euskarian survivors were, in most part, in subjection to (that is, slaves to) their Aryan Celtic conquerors, who shortly, in their turn, became slaves to the Romans.

In appearance, the Acient Briton, *as Cæsar found him, was very much to look at what an ordinary typical German is to-day.*

Truly the history of man upon the earth is a marvellous history, and with David we may well ask, "Lord, what is man? whence came he? whither does he go? Made in the image of God, a little lower than the angels—hurrying, scurrying, quarrelling, fighting—never at rest—Lord, what is man?" "Out of eternity he came, back into eternity he goes,"* that much we know, and that is all we shall know this side of the grave!

*" Aus die Ewigkeit, zu der Ewigkeit hin."
—Carlyle, in " Sartor Resartus."

It is not much less curious to let the mind go back to that period when Britain was subjugated by the Romans, and to think what was Burgess Hill (or its site) "doing" then, and what has happened there and in its neighbourhood of historical interest since the Roman epoch?

When the Romans held sway in these islands they made many roads (some of them splendid examples of engineering) which endure to this day, and most likely will endure as long as the world lasts. Other Roman roads, from various causes,* have become obliterated, or nearly so. A road belonging to this latter class can be traced over St. John's Common. It commenced, no doubt, at the sea-shore, where the River Adur (which now runs into the sea at Shoreham) in those days emptied itself into the sea.† The village of Portslade,‡ nestling on the southern slopes of the South Downs, is the first district to be traversed by this road of which I am speaking. From there it can be traced away over the Downs; passing not far from Wolstonbury Hill, near Clayton Bostel (where it no doubt communicated with the Roman encampment at what is now known as the Devil's Dyke); and so on to St. John's Common, which it crossed, passing close to Wallbridge Mill and crossing the stream.

* No doubt because the places these roads led to and from do not in these days bear the same mutual importance to one another that they did in the Roman days. The roads, therefore, becoming disused, by degrees were overgrown, and so in course of time became either altogether or partially obliterated.

† This was at Aldrington, a place of the utmost importance to the Romans, who were in constant fear of an attack from the "English" (hereafter referred to). Here was a station for the *Numerus exploratum*, as we see by the following:—

*"Præpositus numeri Abulcomni Anderide
Præpositus numeri Exploratorum portu Adurni."*

Their duty was to act as coastguardsmen, and to keep constant watch on the shore between Aldrington, Seaford, and Eastbourne.

‡ Portslade signifies "the way to the port." *Lade* means a way or passage of waters. In corroboration of this, Camden tells us that in the old glossaries we find *aqueductus* translated, not "water way," but "waterlade." (*Horefield*, "*Hist. Sussex*," Vol. I.)

The road can thence be traced through Holmbush Farm, and on to a little east of Butler's Green, onwards to Ardingly and Wakehurst Place ; it soon after becomes lost in a mound at Celsfield Common. A direct line would point from this mound to the Roman encampment at Botley Hill, in Surrey, which communicated with Holwood, near Bromley, in Kent. Along the tract of this road on the downs, and on either side of it, relics of the old Romans are to be found in quantities, especially fragments of pottery ware.*

The island of Britain was altogether a Roman province some 460 years—*i.e.*, from about 50 years B.C. to 410 A.D. During the latter portion of this period the strength of the Roman empire was being slowly sapped. In the year A.D. 411, to defend Italy against the Goths, Rome recalled her legions from Britain, purposing, no doubt, to send them back again. The Fates decreed otherwise : they never returned. Britain, therefore, fell a prey to her neighbours dwelling on the shores of the Northern sea. These hardy

* The compiler of this pamphlet, a few years ago, happened to be standing by some workmen (engaged in digging a pit in a field close to the Portslade station) at the moment they came upon three funeral urns, standing side by side in perfect preservation. Fortunately they were not damaged. On another occasion, the writer, riding along beside a plough at work on his father's estate on the Downs, saw a cinerary urn turned gently up by the plough-share, and very little damaged by it.

Some years ago, at Blatchington (West), which is close to Aldrington and Portslade, some regular walls of the compartments of an extensive Roman villa were found, spreading over a large field, with coins, stucco, and pottery in abundance. In the parsonage grounds at Clayton there are understood to be some splendid Roman excavations. Again, at Danny, the tessellated pavement of a Roman villa was discovered. (*Horsfield.*)

"At Twineham, some three and a-half miles west of the Roman road, some workmen, employed by Mr. John Wood, of Hicksted Place, in digging out the trenches for the foundation of a large conservatory, discovered, at the depth of about two feet, a cinerary urn of unbaked clay and a spear-head. For want of protection the urn was broken, and the spear-head was much corroded. Both are unquestionably Roman. The urn, judging from the fragments seen—and which, if they had been put together, the whole, I think, would have been found to be there—must have stood eight or ten inches high. The spear-head was about four inches long."—*From Vol. XIX., "Sussex Archaeolog. Trans.," Notes and Queries.*

Norsemen, the "English,"* drove the Britons slowly but surely (for these aborigines fought most stubbornly) from their strongholds into the forests, which then covered the face of the country.

It was A.D. 449 that these Norsemen, the "English," gained their first great victory over the Britons (at Aylesford, in Kent, not far from Maidstone); and, eight years later, they gained another important battle. Twenty years later—viz., in 477 A.D.—the "English," with the Saxons (their near kinsfolk), are seen slowly pushing along, and driving the Britons before them, a narrow slip of land, which lay westward of Kent, in the very centre of which strip Burgess Hill is now situated. Speaking of this district, Greene, in his "History of the English People," tells us that "nowhere has the physical aspect of the country been more changed" (since this epoch, A.D. 477). "The vast sheet of scrub, woodland, and waste, which then bore the name of the *Andredswold*, stretched for more than a hundred miles from the borders of Kent to the Hampshire Downs, extending northward almost to the Thames."

Later on, the Saxon kings and their followers—and, much later still, the Plantagenet monarchs and the barons of mediæval times—are reported by tradition to have regarded the Burgess Hill district as a favourite one for hunting in (much as the gentlemen of Wyberlye do in these days); but history gives us no information of a trustworthy character on this head.

Coming down to the Elizabethan period, we find that—

"The imperial votaress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy free,"

from her last halting place, during one of her royal progresses, to Old Oat Hall, a grand old mansion in the immediate neighbourhood. But here, again, we have to

* The "English," so called by historians because they came principally from "the one country which bore the name of England, and is now called Sleswick—a district in the heart of the peninsula which parts the Baltic from the Northern sea."—*Greene's "Hist. of the English People."*

depend on tradition rather than on history, and this same tradition does not tell us where "good Queen Bess" stowed her brilliant suite. Certainly old Ote Hall would not have accommodated them.*

At a later period, we find that the Stuart kings had private property here or hereabouts, and from their time to the present nothing of historical value has occurred worthy of note; but it might be mentioned that, some hundred years ago or rather more, the district was infested by highwaymen and midnight marauders.

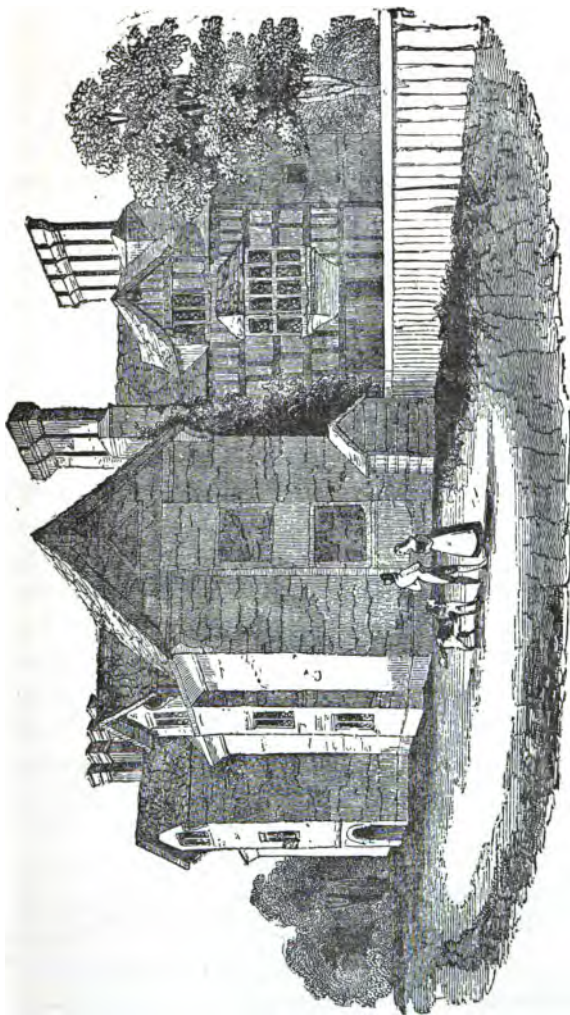
"Time, like an ever rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly forgotten as a dream
Dies at the opening day."

* There is an excellent account of Othall (as it used to be written) in Vol. XIX. of the *Sussex Archaeological Society*, written by the Rev. Edward Turner, M. A. "It is a massive building, we are told, resembling the form of the letter T; the front, which is to the north, being constructed of brick, and the part going off at right angles from it of timber framework and plaster. It is of considerable size, and appears to be but little altered from what it was when first erected. It is of the domestic style of architecture of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Over the projecting entrance is the date 1600, with the initials T. G. There is no doubt these are the initials of Thomas Godman, who owned the estate at the time, and by whom the house was doubtless built. Probably this was only the restoration of a house that had long been standing there, even since the fourteenth year of the reign of Edward III. (1321), when, according to ancient documents, a family of the name of De Othall were lords of the manor. In later years the Shirley family have owned the property.

Some years ago two labourers, engaged in grubbing up the stump of an old tree in a hedgerow at Othall estate, at no great distance from the house, discovered a gold coin of James I., and two or three antique silver spoons, which had been designedly hidden under it. The spoons were marked "J. J. G.," meaning John and Jane Godman."

The house is now being restored, and has again, I believe, passed into the hands of the Godman family. It is worthy of a passing note that Othall was for some years the country residence of the celebrated Selina, Countess of Huntingdon (1760). She fitted up the hall of the mansion as a chapel. Othall was for years a centre of religious influence.

The remains of another Elizabethan house, known by the name of Hammond's Place, are in good preservation at St. John's. It was formerly a mansion of some importance. On the front, over the door, is engraved in stone, with the date 1565, a shield with these arms: a chevron enrailed between three bucks' heads, two and one, and over it the letters E. M., i. e., Edward Michelbourne. A great part of Hammond's Place has been taken down. It had formerly two projecting wings, which extended nearly to the wall adjoining the road. There was also an open court in the centre, now demolished.—(*Vide Sussex Archaeolog. Coll., Vol. XIII.*)



O T E H A L L .

(Copied from Vol. XIX. of the Sussex Archaeolog. Coll.)





Chapter IV.

*I have not seen the place could more surprise,
More beautiful in Nature's varied dyes.*—BEN JONSON.

The scenery around Burgess Hill is noted as being amongst the most charming in any part of the county. Standing high, as it does, in the heart of Sussex, the views it commands are lovely. The scenery is diversified; but if it has a fault, it is the want of a picturesque river in its immediate neighbourhood. To make amends for this, Nature has given the dweller in these parts the grand old South Downs, with their ever varying tints of colour and graceful outlines, daily to feast his gaze upon. The highest of these is, according to Horsfield, "Ditcheling Bostal"* (858 feet). (Bostal is a name given to all the roads running in a zigzag direction up the Downs from the Weald.)

The Rev. Gilbert White's well known "Natural History of Selborne" contains a letter, dated from Lewes in 1773, from which the following is an extract;—

"Although I have now travelled the Sussex Downs upwards of thirty years, yet I still investigate that chain of majestic mountains with fresh admiration year by year, and I think I see new beauties every time I traverse it. This range, which runs from Chichester

* Probably from the French, *bois taillé*. (Rev. G. White.)

eastward as far as East Bourn, is about sixty miles in length, and is called the South Downs, properly speaking, only round Lewes. As you pass along, you command a noble view of the Wold or Weald on one hand, and the broad Downs and sea on the other. Mr. Ray used to visit the Courthopes of Danny, just at the foot of these hills, and was so ravished with the prospect from Plympton* plain, near Lewes, that he mentions those capes in his 'Wisdom of God in the Works of Creation' with the utmost satisfaction, and thinks them equal to anything he has seen in the finest parts of Europe. For my own part, I think there is somewhat peculiarly sweet and amusing in the shapely figured aspect of chalk hills, in preference to those of stone, which are rugged, broken, abrupt, and shapeless.

"Perhaps I may be singular in my opinion, and not so happy as to convey to you the same idea; but I never contemplate these mountains without thinking I perceive somewhat analogous to growth in their gentle swellings and smooth, fungus-like protuberances, their fluted sides and regular hollows and slopes, that carry at once the air of vegetative dilatation and expansion. Or was there ever a time when these immense masses of calcareous matter were thrown into fermentation by some adventitious moisture, were raised and leavened into such shapes by some plastic power, and so made to swell and heave their broad backs into the sky, so much above the less animated clay of the wild† below?

"By what I can guess from the admeasurements of the hills that have been taken round my house, I should suppose that these hills surmount the wild,* on an average, at about the rate of 500 feet."

It is not necessary to leave Burgess Hill itself in order to enjoy some very charming scenery; for, go where you will, the eye first encounters one beautiful view after another. There is, however, nothing more beautiful, to my own mind, than the effect of light and shade on the South Down range, especially about sunset on a summer evening. The clouds, as they rush by, throw their shadows on the hills, causing an effect which is truly lovely. There is, by the way, no better spot to watch this, than from a point along the Keymer road, just as the road turns up by Ockley Manor.

* Plumpton, about three miles south east of Burgess Hill.

† By the word "wild," Weald is probably meant, for even 110 years ago the Weald was not a wild. The word "Weald," I imagine, is derived from the Saxon "Wald"—a forest.

Burgess Hill, owing to its central situation enables the pedestrian to visit all the surrounding places of interest (and their name is legion) with ease and comfort, and without fatigue; whilst those who, for any reason, are unable to walk, will find the drives and rides (whether on horse, bicycle, or tricycle) as charming as anything can be.

In the Spring and early Summer months, when the ground is carpeted with the loveliest of wild flowers, nothing can exceed in beauty the walk from Burgess Hill to Lindfield, a distance of about five miles. The road, starting across Ditchling common (itself a mass of colour; and with a breeze straight from the sea, over the life-giving Downs, always blowing over it), leads the wayfarer through one enchanting piece of scenery after another. And I know of no better month for this walk than on a glorious May morning, when, as Dryden sings—

“ For thee, sweet month, the groves green liveries wear—
If not the first, the fairest of the year;
For thee the graces lead the dancing hours,
And Nature’s ready pencil paints the flowers.”

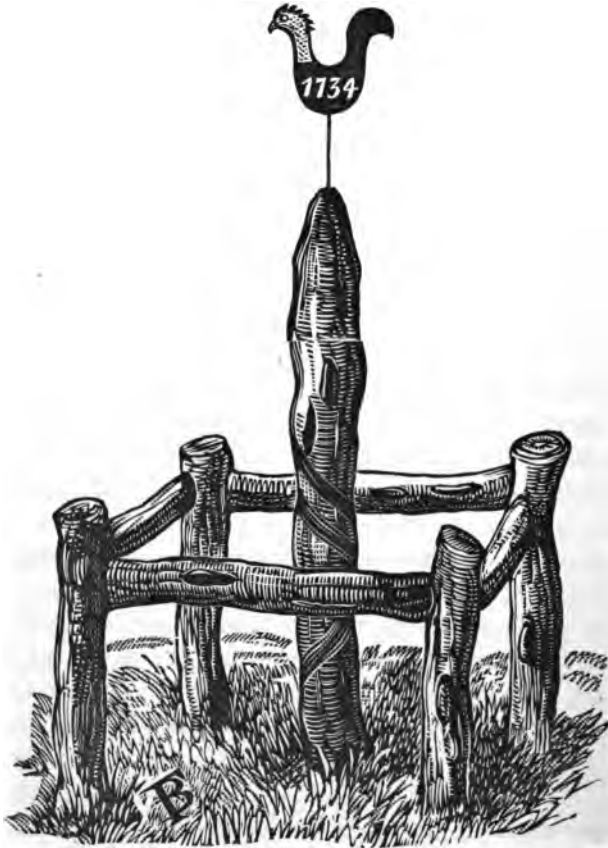
On the left-hand side of the road running across Ditchling common, at its northern extremity, one sees a curious looking object, which excites a good deal of wonder. It is simply a wooden post, with the figure of a rooster perching on the top of it. This post is religiously guarded by four other posts and rails. At first sight one cannot imagine what on earth it can mean; but, on making enquiries at the inn close at hand, one is told that it is “Jacob’s Post,” and the following is its history:—

In 1734 a remarkable tragedy occurred in this parish (Wivelsfield). Jacob Harris, a Jew pedlar, committed three very barbarous murders at the public-house at the further (north) end of Ditchling common. He was caught at Horsham, tried and executed, and afterwards hung in chains on Ditchling common, close to the scene of the murders.

There is a rhyme going about this tragedy :—

“ At Horsham gallows he was hanged there,
 The thirty-first of August that same year;
 And where he did the crime they took the pains
 To bring him back and hang him up in chains.
 It is a dismal sight for to behold,
 Enough to make a heart of stone run cold.”

Part of the gibbet still remains, and is called “Jacob’s Post.” Formerly a fragment of this post, carried in the



JACOB'S POST.

(On Ditchling Common.)

pocket, was considered a cure for toothache ; and I (the compiler of this pamphlet), so recently as 1881, being called to a man who was in an epileptic fit, was told by an old man (a native of Newick), " Ah ! sir, pity sure a lye he 'adn't a bit of Jacob's Poist in his pocket ! "—" Why so," I replied. " Why, don't ee know, sir, they *do* say, no one wouldn't never 'ave this yere faulin' sickness if he 'ad a bit o' Jacob's Poist loike about 'im. Whoy, sir, people comes *moils and moils*, from round Ashdown forest way, to get a bit of dat poisty, so as they shouldn't faul wiv these yer fits." So we live and learn !

*Lindfield is one of the prettiest villages in England, and must be seen to be appreciated ; it would be impossible to do justice to it here. The return journey should be by way of Hayward's Heath, passing the Asylum and taking the road by the " Rookery " toll-house. Just beyond the " Sand Rocks " (the seat of T. Renshaw, Esq.) is a bridge crossing the railway at a great height, from which a most enchanting prospect is to be had. The sand rocks immediately beyond this are very curious.

Cuckfield, of course, must be visited ; it is only some four or five miles away. This is one of the oldest places in the county, and it stands up to the north of Burgess Hill, forming one of the sweetest features of the landscape, especially of an early morning, when the sun just catches the old church steeple.

It is at Cuckfield that the romantic park, with its old fashioned mansion, is situated, the property of the ancient family of Sergison (the lords of the manor). Ainsworth took this spot to form the ground plot of his well known novel, " Rookwood."

* Since the above was in type my attention has been called to the following paragraph in the *Mid-Sussex Times* :—" ' Glimpses of our Ancestors in Sussex, and Gleanings in East and West Sussex.' This work by Mr. Charles Fleet (formerly of Norrington, Lindfield) has just been issued. It abounds with local references and descriptions, especially as regards Lindfield, its Schools, Old Houses, &c. This book is embellished with several good engravings, Price 5s."

Given a glorious summer morning, with health and strength and good strong limbs, there is no walk in the neighbourhood to beat the one I am about hastily to mention. To enjoy it thoroughly one should be "up with the lark in the morning." As Milton says in his "L'Allegro":—

"To hear the lark begin his flight,
And, singing, startle the dull night
From his watch tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise."

Of course it can be enjoyed later in the day, but there is no time like early morning. At school they taught us, "*Diliculo surgere saluberrimum est*," and since those dear old days (spent also, many of them, at the foot of the South Downs) how often have I been able to appreciate those lines of Shakespeare!—

"Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy.
Lo! here the gentle lark, weary of rest,
From his moist cabinet mounts up on high,
And wakes the morning, from whose silver heart
The sun ariseth in his majesty;
Who doth the world so gloriously behold,
The cedar tops and hills seem burnished gold."

And if a walk is delightful on one day more than on another, it is on a *Sunday* morning, when a sense of calm and peacefulness seems to reign on every hand.

The walk I am about to refer to is from Burgess Hill to the Devil's Dyke, a distance of about nine miles; the journey thither lying through most lovely scenery, enchanting the eye and lifting the heart in praise and thankfulness to the Almighty Creator of all these blessings we enjoy so much.

"Oh! may my understanding ever read
 This glorious volume which Thy wisdom made,
 May sea and land and earth and heaven be joined
 To bring the eternal Author to my mind!
 When oceans roar or awful thunders roll,
 May thoughts of Thy dread vengeance shake my soul!
 When earth's in bloom or planets proudly shine,
 Adore my heart the Majesty Divine.
 Grant I may ever, at the morning ray
 Open with prayer the consecrated day,
 Tune Thy great praise, and bid my soul arise,
 And with the mounting sun ascend the skies."—YOUNG.

There are several ways of going—either by Ockley Manor, Hammond's Place, or Hurst College; but, whichever way be chosen, the pedestrian finds himself, after a four miles walk, at Hurstpierpoint, with his nerves and muscles well braced up, his blood thoroughly oxygenated, and his whole being

"Exulting rich beyond the wealth of kings,"

as Wordsworth puts it.

Here he halts awhile, taking a look at the quiet, picturesque old town, with its fine church. Overshadowing this village, stands up the famous Wolstonbury hill, before referred to, but which is out of the way for a visit during our present walk. A stroll through the grand old park, with its stately elms, is however, a *sine quâ non*.

Having rested awhile, it is better to pursue our journey to the Dyke *viâ* Newtimber and Poynings, and as we journey along, contemplating on every side scenery which makes the soul rejoice, the words of an old poet, (Howitt) force themselves upon the mind:—

"When forth I go upon my way, a thousand joys are mine—
 The clusters of dark violets, the wreaths of the wild vine.
 My jewels are the primrose pale, the bindweed and the rose;
 And show me any courtly gem more beautiful than those."

Having left Hurst in the rear, we presently come to Newtimber, where the road branches off to the left to Brighton. Taking the road that dips down to the right, we pass through a grove of shading trees, some of them of great antiquity. On our left is a waterfall, charming the ear with its silvery music. Presently, again on the left, we see Newtimber church, and further on some grand old beeches shade the road on either side as we mount the acclivity. And here let us pause for a moment to recover breath and look round us, and, hark! what sound is that this glorious Sabbath morning?—The bells of Hurst church, ringing out their melodious summons to worship! Yes! And village bells can be heard “knolling to church,” some far and some near, in every direction. Those bells! Who does not love their melody? Hood did, and sweetly he sings of them :—

“Dear bells! how sweet the sound of village bells,
 When on the undulating air they swim!
 Now loud as welcomes! faint now as farewells!
 And trembling all about the breezy dells,
 As flutter'd by the wings of cherubim.
 Meanwhile the bees are chanting a low hymn;
 And, lost to sight, th' ecstatic lark above,
 Sings like a soul beatified of love;
 With now and then the coo of the wild pigeon.
 O pagans, heathens, infidels, and doubters!
 If such sweet sounds can't woo you to religion,” &c.

But to proceed. A little further on, and we cross the road leading from Brighton to Poynings, and enter an avenue composed chiefly of beech trees, skirting the foot of the Downs, which here mount up to a great height, on the left hand. Here, amongst the fine old trees, the hand of “'Arry” has been busy defacing the spot, by recording on the barks of the trees that *he* has been there. (Where does not “'Arry” go, and where does he go but he takes jolly good care all the world should know it?)

This avenue leads us into the Brighton and Seddlescome road, and, turning sharp to our left, we mount a steepish hill until we come to an old toll-house. There we turn down to our right, and in a few minutes find ourselves at the foot of a hill, at the churchyard of Poynings church. (Here again, alas! is the hateful name of "Arry" scribbled wherever there's room for a spider to crawl, in the porch, and often in the sacred edifice itself.) Poynings is well worth a visit, and those who have read "Ovingdean Grange" will be doubly interested in it.

Crossing the brooks—their selves so sweet one could never tire of them—we find ourselves in the valley of the Devil's Dyke. Continuing upwards, we are at length delighted with perhaps the most glorious landscape to be seen anywhere in England. According to the advertisements, one is supposed to be able to see into eight counties and the Isle of Wight, to see 60 churches and the new monastery at Cowfold. I have had Windsor Castle pointed out to me from the Dyke. I saw *something* with a glass, it is true; but imagine that it would be impossible to see Windsor Castle, let the state of the atmosphere be what it would.

"Forte puer, comitum seductus ab agmine fido,
Dixerat equis adest? et, adest, responderat echo.
Hic stupet; utque aciem partes divisit in omnes;
Voce, veni, clamat magnâ. Vocat illa vocantem.

"It is not surprising that, in a district so diversified as the one we are supposed to have just passed through, if echoes should abound. Buildings or naked rocks re-echo much more articulately than hanging woods or vales. All echoes have some one place to which they are returned stronger and more distinct than to any other, and that is always the place that lies at right angles with the object of repercussion, and is not too near nor too far off."* Now to test this. Instead of returning the way we came to Burgess Hill, it would be interesting to go on through the vales, testing the echoes, and over the hills to Brighton, a distance of only five miles, and so home again by train; as I, the writer,

* "White's Selborne,"

have done many a time when a boy, "making the welkins ring."

Other walks, rides, and drives there are, of course, in every direction from Burgess Hill, but it is not possible to describe them all. I cannot, however, conclude without speaking of Ditchling, and giving some little history, however imperfect, of this, one of the most ancient villages in Sussex.

It is about three miles from Burgess Hill. Taking the upper road through Burgess Hill (the Keymer road), after walking about a "Sussex" mile, we presently come to a quaint and very picturesque old house, on our left-hand side. This is Ockley Manor. The house is very ancient, but how old I do not know. It was built, I believe, some 300 years ago. We learn from Horsfield that in Henry III.'s reign this manor belonged to Nicholas de Hogan "by the service of half a knight's fee and three barbed arrows." Ultimately it passed into the hands of the ancient family of Wood, and is now possessed and occupied by James Wood, Esq.

Leaving this old place, and following the road, which here curves round to the left, we come to the spot already referred to, where such a grand view of the South Downs is to be had. Lying at our feet is the ancient village of Keymer, looking very *modern* indeed with its *restored* church, but always neat and picturesque. Keymer, when Domesday Book was compiled, was called "Chemere" (from the Saxon *cyme* and *mere*).

We now, on entering Keymer, turn sharp to our left, pass through the village, and on an acclivity, about a quarter of a mile ahead, stands Ditchling. The church, an ancient structure, with a dear old clock in its tower, stands up high on the left, and some ancient and very curious houses are on the right of the traveller. We will come back to these houses presently, and in the meantime will think for a minute about the history of this obviously very ancient place.

The very air is laden with history and tradition, and it is difficult to get at the truth—or rather it would be, had not the Rev. Thomas Hutchinson, M.A. (vicar in 1861), been at great pains to give us an excellent history of the village in Vol. XIII. of the “Sussex Archæological Collections.” Horsfield and M. A. Lower, in their respective histories of Sussex, dwell at some length also on the history of Ditchling.

To begin with its name. It is variously written in old records, as Dickninge, Dycheninge, Dychelinge, and Decelinges, all of which seem to spring from the Saxon *dyce* or *dykening*. This early English word signifies an enclosure of any description. Now, in all probability, there was formerly a royal park here, even in the days of Alfred (commonly called Alfred the Great, than whom no wiser or better monarch ever ruled in these islands.) Moreover, there is every reason to suppose that Alfred came here (to look into the School Board management in these parts), and, liking the place so much, took up his abode in it.* The remains of the “palace,” it is believed, were dug out some few years ago. King Alfred bequeathed the place in his will to his kinsman Osferth:—“Et Osfertho cognato meo, do villas de . . . et de Deccaligno (*Deccalignum* being the Latin equivalent for *Dykening*) necnon et omnes terras ad illas pertinentes.”

Later on, we find it in the possession of Edward the Confessor; and later still, when His Majesty King William the Conqueror was kind enough to pay these islands a visit, with a view to looking after their interests, he was obliging enough to hand Dycheninge over as a present to his son-in-

* That he lived in a house here is proved almost conclusively by an MS. left by his intimate friend and biographer. Here is an extract from it:—“His temporibus ego quoque a rege advocatus de occidente et ultimis Britanniæ finibus ad Saxoniam adveni . . . ibique illum in villâ regiâ, quæ dicitur Dene, primitus visi.—Asserius de rebus gestis Alfredi.”—*Mon. Hist. Brit. Petrie*, page 487. And again: “Cum igitur ad eum advenissem in villâ regiâ quæ dicitur Leonaford.”—*Ibid.*, page 488.

law, William de Warrenne, the husband of his daughter Gunrada. Later still, we find that Edward II., when he was Prince of Wales, kept a stud of horses in the park here. Like other folks who keep horses, he found they didn't pay. He got into debt over them, and was even threatened with proceedings. However, he managed to get out of the *mess* somehow; probably by some of those gentle measures so well understood by the aristocracy of these æsthetic (I should say mediæval) times. Going on in history, we find Henry VIII. making a present of Dychevinge with much bombast to one of his many wives, Ann Cleves. There is, amongst other absurd traditions in the place, one to the effect that this same very much married monarch kept one of his wives (Anne Boleyn) in durance vile in one of the timbered houses to be now spoken of.

Hutchinson says:—"The old timber-framed buildings at the western entrance of the village deservedly attract the attention of all visitors. They (and the church) are the remaining evidence of the antiquity of the place. Every story connected with this park and the old timber-framed houses has reference either to Alfred, Gunrada, Anne of Cleves, or the Ranger; and these legends, however improbable, if not impossible, tend nevertheless to confirm the opinion that these great personages were directly or indirectly associated with this place."





Conclusion.

*For Nature soon in Spring's best charms,
Shall rise revived from Winter's grave,
Expand the bursting bud again,
And bid the flower re-bloom.*

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

The Winter time at Burgess Hill is not the dull, dreary season it is in so many country places. It abounds with ponds in every direction. There is hunting to be had in all the neighbourhood far and near, and plenty of good shooting. The skating is so good that hundreds of people come from the neighbouring large towns to avail themselves of the ponds to indulge their favourite Winter pastime. And then we have to perfection, when the days draw in, what Cowper describes as—

“Fireside enjoyments, home-born happiness,
And all the comforts that the lowly roof
Of undisturbed retirement and the hours
Of long, uninterrupted evening know.
* * * * *
Now stir the fire and close the shutters fast,
Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
And while the bubbling and loud hissing urn
Throws up a steaming column, and the cups
Which cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
So let us welcome peaceful evening in.”

But, thank God, it is not always Winter, though we get
our share of it even at Burgess Hill. Spring, with its never
ending delights, is before us, when

“Heaven descends
In universal bounty, shedding herbs
And fruits and flowers on Nature’s ample lap!”

—*Thompson.*

Then it is that Burgess Hill is in very truth

“A little heaven below.”

And now I must take my cordial farewell of my reader,
wishing him no worse fate than that he may soon become,
if he has not already done so, an inhabitant of Burgess Hill.



Finis.

LIST OF WORKS

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Ben Jonson—Southey—Dryden—Wordsworth—Shakespeare—
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BURGESS HILL AS A HEALTH RESORT:

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[WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.]

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If thou art worn and hard beset
With sorrows that thou would'st forget;
If thou would'st read a lesson, that will keep
Thy heart from fainting and thy soul from sleep,
GO TO THE WOODS AND HILLS! No tears
Dim the sweet look that Nature wears.—LONGFELLOW.

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